

Volunteer Service Group

Public Health Emergency Management



WELCOME!



If you have recently joined the Volunteer Service Group (VSG) – welcome! This “newsletter” is one of the ways we keep in touch with our members. If you have any questions or comments, feel free to contact us.

Our Emergency Response Plan

When developing plans, there is always one sure thing . . . everything is subject to change. The challenge is to make sure everyone on the team has the most up to date information. Here is a brief summary of our plan, and the role of the VSG.

- VSG members can be called to respond to natural or intentionally caused public health emergencies
- Depending on the event, our public health response will focus on the mass dispensing of medications or vaccinations to the public
- Points of Dispensing (PODs) will be established throughout Maricopa County to ensure that the public has access to necessary treatment and information
- VSG members can potentially establish and operate PODs at more than 100 predetermined locations
- Necessary medication and supplies can come from both the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) and local resources
- Registered, trained, dedicated volunteers are key to our response

We have come a long way, but we have much more to do and much farther to go. Thank you for your continued service to the residents of Maricopa County. Go VSG Team!

A Few Words from our Director!

At the urging of Brenda Hope - our relentless Volunteer Coordinator - I'd like to introduce myself. I'm the (sort of) new Director of Maricopa County's Public Health Emergency Management Program, or PHEM - though elsewhere in the state, the usual term



Kevin Neill hard at work . . .

is just Bioterrorism (BT) Coordinator. And in case you didn't know, there are 14 other BT Programs in Arizona besides Maricopa, one for each county.

I've been here since the end of February. Before that, I was the BT Coordinator in Navajo County for two years. Before THAT, I was with the Arizona Dept of Health Services for two years, living in the East Valley. My public health career before Arizona was spent in Idaho, Massachusetts, and Missouri - which is where I'm from originally. Now I live in central Phoenix with two dogs, two cats, and a library card.

But enough about me (good idea, that). What I'd really like to let everyone know is that I totally realize that everything we do as a Program, everything we plan for, is dependent on you guys: the volunteers. And though I haven't met you yet, I want to assure you that we intend to make good use of you in the future by training you as best we can. Yes, training. We're actually going to get started on this fairly soon, and training and exercises will be one of the central things we plan to accomplish in the coming months. Because (to paraphrase a famous person), without you . . . the volunteers . . . we're nothing.

See you around.

Online Volunteer Registration



How many times have you said to yourself “I wish there was an online VSG registration system that I could access from the comfort of my own home”?

Your wish will soon be granted!

Maricopa County has joined the Arizona Volunteer System – the online volunteer management system used by several Arizona counties.

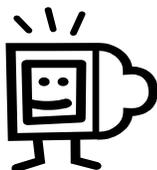
By visiting www.AZVolunteers.com, potential volunteers will be able to review descriptions of the various positions at PODs, search for positions based on a zip code, and register to become a member of the VSG. Registered VSG members will be able to login to the system with a “User ID” and a “Password”. Once in the system, volunteers can update their contact information or edit their volunteer profile. VSG members will also be able to indicate whether they are available to help out in another county, if needed.

If you prefer to do things the “old fashioned way”, you can contact our office and we will mail a VSG form to you. You can also contact the Volunteer Coordinator to update your contact information.

But if you prefer to “do it yourself”, the online volunteer management system will soon be just a “click” away.

Did You Know?

Our website is back up; however, it is in need of a facelift. Coming soon . . . the first phase of our newly designed site.



Pandemic Influenza

Pandemic influenza is a global outbreak of disease from a new influenza virus that is unlike past influenza viruses. Because most or all people would not have immunity to a new pandemic virus, large numbers of persons around the world could be infected.

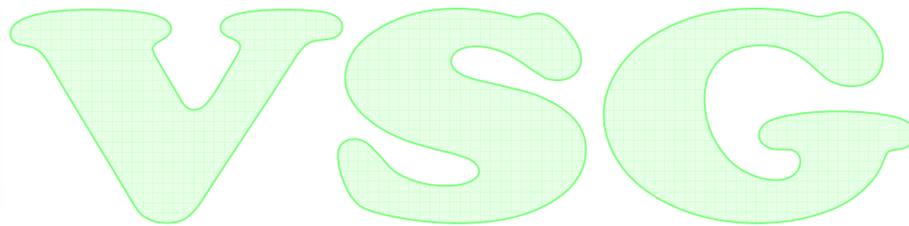
Vaccine development efforts are under way to protect humans against a pandemic influenza virus that might develop from the avian influenza A (H5N1) virus. The situation with Avian Influenza remains that we are at Pandemic Alert stage 3, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO). While there have been reports of isolated human to human transmission of the Influenza H5N1 virus, there has **not** been sustained human to human transmission.

Inter-pandemic phase	Low risk of human cases	1
New virus in animals, no human cases	Higher risk of human cases	2
Pandemic alert	No or very limited human-to-human transmission	3
New virus causes human cases	Evidence of increased human-to-human transmission	4
	Evidence of significant human-to-human transmission	5
Pandemic	Efficient and sustained human-to-human transmission	6

Planning for a local response to a pandemic is ongoing. The Maricopa County Department of Public Health, Division of Public Health Emergency Management is working with our partner agencies at the state and local level, as well as with the private sector to ensure that plans are integrated.

The role that public health volunteers will play is in development. There will be a mass dispensing and mass vaccination component similar to the one in our Emergency Response Plan. That said, activation of this component will depend on the availability of medication and vaccination doses.

Robert French, MD MPH



Public Health
Emergency Management



Training and Such

Remember – The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) offers disaster and emergency preparedness courses on-line for free. These courses can be completed at your convenience, and FEMA will send you proof of successful completion. Among the courses offered is Incident Command System: Introduction to ICS (ICS-100), a course that is recommended for all volunteers.

Visit www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/crslist.asp for a listing of classes available.

PHEM has contracted with a local vendor to provide on-site ICS training classes. These four (4)-hour sessions are for public health employees, but VSG members are invited to participate whenever there are open seats. The ICS training schedule is as follows:

4041 N. Central Ave., Phoenix

July 19, 2006	8:00am-12:00pm	1:00-5:00pm
July 20, 2006	8:00am-12:00pm	1:00-5:00pm
July 26, 2006	8:00am-12:00pm	1:00-5:00pm
Aug 10, 2006	8:00am-12:00pm	1:00-5:00pm
Aug 25, 2006	8:00am-12:00pm	1:00-5:00pm

1645 E. Roosevelt St., Phoenix

Aug 3, 2006	8:00am-12:00pm	1:00-5:00pm
Aug 15, 2006	8:00am-12:00pm	1:00-5:00pm
Aug 31, 2006	8:00am-12:00pm	1:00-5:00pm

To register for a session, contact Virgil at 602-372-2663 or VirgilMartinez@mail.maricopa.gov.

This may lead you to ask, “What are the basic training requirements for volunteers?” “What training and experience should I have if I want to be a POD Manager?” I’m glad you asked! We are finalizing “Training and Educational Requirements for PHEM Volunteers”, which will outline the requirements for various levels of responsibility at PODs. Some of the training requirements can be done on-line; others will involve a more structured setting. All volunteers should complete orientation, personal preparedness training, and Incident Command System training.

News from our Neighbors

Volunteers in our neighboring counties have been working to ensure that they are ready to respond in the event of an emergency. Here are some highlights from Yavapai, Pima and Pinal Counties.

■ More than 100 Medical Reserve Corps Volunteers, public health staff, Red Cross volunteers, and observers braved the cold and turned out for the April 1st mass vaccination exercise conducted by Yavapai County Community Health Services. Cheryl Barton, Yavapai County’s Medical Reserve Corps Coordinator, reported that the exercise included rapid clinic set-up, just-in-time training, and POD operations. Cheryl noted that it takes a big team to make a mass vaccination clinic run smoothly.



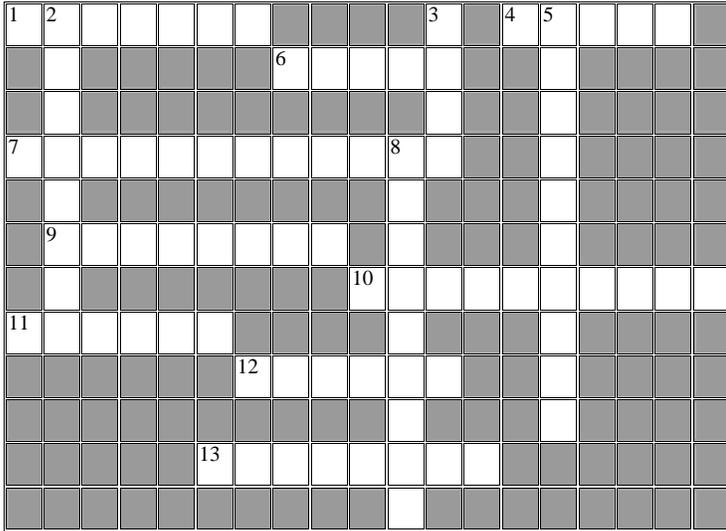
■ On April 29th, Pinal County tested their mass vaccination plan with a POD exercise. The exercise simulated some of the key activities needed to successfully vaccinate a large population in the county in response to a disease outbreak. Andrea Huerta, Volunteer Program Coordinator for Pinal County Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response, reported that it was the volunteers’ dedication, teamwork, and community spirit that helped make their exercise successful.

■ On the morning of June 9th, 154 nurses and community volunteers participated in a POD drill in central Tucson. The drill, which followed two days of training and workshops, was intended to simulate the steps that will occur in preparation for mass prophylaxis and/or immunization. Tim Siensen, Volunteer Coordinator, reported that teams assigned to triage, communications, and documentation received “just in time” briefings and utilized the incident command system to establish operations under a unified command.



VSG

Puzzling Times



ACROSS

- 1. Volunteer _____ Group
- 4. H5N1 causes _____ flu
- 6. Print, radio, TV
- 7. Emergency or personal
- 9. _____ Command System
- 10. Part of FEMA
- 11. Part of PHEM
- 12. Photo IDs
- 13. A learning experience

DOWN

- 2. Test our plans
- 3. _____ dispensing
- 5. Key to our response
- 8. _____ National Stockpile

FYI...

In addition to ICS training, we are also setting up a schedule of “working meetings”. These meetings will be an opportunity to discuss specific areas of our plan, and the roles of the various functional areas. And we’ll be able to start taking photos for our VSG badges.

And then . . . then we will test our plans with a bit of exercise!



It’s official! Public Health Emergency Management has moved to a new location. Contact us at . . .

Public Health Emergency Management Volunteer Service Group

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